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Development of international migration statistics on the basis of census and administrative data

Prepared by the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation

Summary

The paper considers the role of population and housing census, surveys and administrative data sources in compiling migration statistics. Measuring migration is considered as a challenge also for the quality of population estimates as discrepancies are often attributed to misreporting of migration. One of the most pressing challenges is to establish a migration monitoring system, in which different types of data would complement each other rather than provide society with conflicting information.

Population censuses are the key source of data on migration. For instance, only the census provides information on the number of migrants who were born outside the Russian Federation or non-citizens and on their main characteristics. The use of sample surveys should be improved, and the use of administrative data for measuring migration has substantially increased, and this trend is expected to continue.

The paper is presented for discussion to the Conference of European Statisticians seminar on migration statistics.

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I. Introduction

1. During the last decade the Russian Federation has seen a rapid development of statistical frameworks, also regarding the survey of migration. Migration statistics attract attention of a number of users: scientists, politicians, business representatives, government officers and others.

2. Despite the continuing economic crisis of the end of the first decade and the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the scales of long-term and short-term migration have increased. In 2012, the Russian Federation received about 420 thousand migrants that arrived for domicile or for over a year, while the number of temporary labour migrants who gained access to the Russian labour market reached almost three million people.

3. The scales, diversity and perceptible effects of migration for the Russian Federation and its certain regions (due to the great disparity of migration flows) require permanent monitoring. There is a need for information not only as to the grand totals, but also as to the diversity of structural determinants of flows and stocks of international migrants.

4. In contrast to the recent situation, nowadays in the Russian Federation, several data collection systems allowing studying of various aspects of migration are smoothly running. Moreover, both old data sources and new, mainly administrative sources, enable extending the perception of migration. Furthermore, the capacity to analyse current statistics has been actively developed in the Russian Federation lately.

II. Sources of information

5. Statistics of long-term migration are conducted by the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) and Federal Migration Service of Russia (FMS). Rosstat maintains the statistics of migration flows, the totals of which are applied to the estimate of population size in years in between censuses. These figures are considered to be official statistical information of international and internal migration in the Russian Federation. With regard to both international and internal migrants, data are collected through paper forms, the so-called arrival statistical form. Departure form is completed only in case of emigration abroad.

6. Departures within the country are determined on the basis of the information concerning the previous residence that migrants indicate when registering for a new place of residence. Up to and including 2010 statistical forms were comprised only for those migrants, who were registered at the new place of residence. Persons registered at the place of temporary residence were not taken into account despite the actual period of residence. Immediately after the introduction of a new registration system, in the mid-1990s, the upper limit of 180 days established for registration was cancelled.

7. A significant portion of such migrants remained in a new place of residence for over a year, but they were not included in statistics. Thus, there was a notable underestimation of long-term migration, since neither arrivals nor departures within the Russian Federation were considered. After continuous work to elaborate the criteria of statistics and in coordination with the Federal Migration Service, since 2011 Rosstat has applied the new methodology of statistics. It has been decided to take into consideration not only migrants registering at the place of residence but also those who register for the period of over 9 months.

8. The choice of this interval is not accidental. It is connected with the peculiarities of Russian legislation as to the registration of citizens of the Russian Federation and migration registration of foreigners. While changing the place of residence, a citizen of the Russian Federation has the right not to register within 90 days. Foreigners also have the right to remain in the Russian Federation as temporary arrivals for three months, and then only after receiving a long-term contract for work or study or temporary residence permit, they will get migration registration for a long-term.

9. The United Nations criterion "a year and over" is observed by the registration of migrants for nine months and over, as they have already stayed in the new place of residence for three months. These new rules of data compilation allowed registering educational migration flows, because previously students who obtained registration for an academic year could not be taken into account.

10. The following data are given as reference: out of 418,000 long-term migrants who arrived in Russia in 2012, the majority (88,000) came from Uzbekistan. Their share increased from 18 per cent in 2011 to 21 per cent in 2012. About 12 per cent of immigrants came from Ukraine (49,000), 11 per cent from Kazakhstan (45,000), 10 per cent of inflow was from Armenia (41,000), 9 per cent from Tajikistan and 8 per cent from Kyrgyzstan (42,000 and 35,000, respectively).

11. Outflow accounting for a new category of migrants is registered automatically at the expiry of a registration term at the place of temporal residence. This date is indicated in the statistical forms for arrivals and added to a database after entering the information concerning the arrivals. Hereby the departure destination is considered to be the previous residence of a migrant. This explains a sharp increase of the amount of departures from Russia in 2012; approximately 122,000 in contrast to 36,000 in 2011. Indeed these data do not show the grounds for rapid growth of emigration from Russia.

12. These changes are often due to the expiry of temporary registration of immigrants, who registered during the previous year. Assumedly a significant portion of these immigrants will get a new registration and then again be counted as arrivals. However, the new methodology raises some challenges, most of which can be solved by switching to a computerized format of data exchange with the Federal Migration Service, as well as by organizing some inspections to assess the accuracy of information received from the FMS.

13. It should be noted that statistics of flows are developed on a wide range of variables number of which is gradually increasing. Flow data are available on departures and arrivals, sex and age groups of migrants, their citizenship and reasons for relocation, educational level, marital status, period of previous residence, and since 2012 also the place of birth. Administrative data sources still do not provide such diversity of information. The resulting statistics are published in Microsoft Excel and HTML formats; and they are available on Rosstat website.

14. Furthermore, Rosstat keeps records of migration as part of the population censuses. The programs of the last Soviet and two Russian censuses contain questions about the place of birth, citizenship and both national and linguistic characteristics of the population. The question regarding the place of residence one year prior to the census was first introduced in 2010.

15. The new information collected brought about profound changes in the numbers of migrants born outside the Russian Federation. Although still the main part (93 per cent of 11.2 million people) of this population consists of persons born in other countries of the former Soviet Union, the flows of migrants arriving in the Russian Federation in recent years changed the composition of international migrants. The ratio of natives of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) decreased, and on the contrary, the ratio of persons born in countries of Central Asia increased. For example,

from 2002 to 2010, the number of natives migrating from Ukraine decreased by 17 per cent, Belarus 21 per cent, and the number of those born in Tajikistan increased by 18 per cent, Uzbekistan by 21 per cent and Kyrgyzstan by 24 per cent.

16. Migrants born in countries located in the European part of the former Soviet Union have an older age composition, and the great number of those who were born in countries of Central Asia consists of young working aged people. These changes indicate that temporary migrant workers gradually settle down in the Russian Federation for permanent residence, change their status and obtain citizenship. Thus, the segment of international migrants due to the collapse of the Soviet Union (they were born in one republic of the Soviet Union and moved to another until 1991) is gradually being replaced by international migrants.

17. It should be noted that the total values of resident population with foreign citizenship of the 2010 Russian population census and the related data of FMS (foreigners with residence permits and temporary residence permits for the same date) are very close, as well as are the figures on the distribution of migrants by sex and age group. Apart from the resident population, other population temporarily residing for about a year on the territory of the Russian Federation was surveyed using the short questionnaire. Thus, it is not possible to provide the completeness of records in this category of foreigners.

18. Administrative data on long-term migrants are compiled by FMS. These include, first of all, the information on the number of foreigners granted a temporary residence permit or a residence permit, which can be regarded as information on flows. FMS also maintains records of segment of migrants, that is, foreigners who live in the Russian Federation by residence permits and current temporary residence permits. This information is available upon request, and is aggregated by nationality, sex, age and region.

19. In 2012, FMS issued 221,000 temporary residence permits (TRP) and 126,000 residence permits. Among the foreigners obtaining TRP the majority were citizens of Kazakhstan (17 per cent), Ukraine (16 per cent), Uzbekistan (15 per cent), Armenia (12 per cent) and Tajikistan (10 per cent). The greatest number of residence permits was received by citizens from Ukraine (23,000 or 18 per cent), Armenia (21,000 or 15 per cent), Uzbekistan (17,000 or 13 per cent) and Tajikistan (15,000 or almost 10 per cent). As compared with 2011, the most notable increase in the number of residence permits was recorded for the citizens of Kyrgyzstan (more than three times), Belarus (2.7 times), China (twice) and Azerbaijan (by 45 per cent). There was a fifty per cent increase in the number of residence permits issued to citizens of Kazakhstan. In 2011, residence permits granted to citizens of Georgia, Tajikistan and Vietnam increased by almost 40 per cent.

20. As it was noted, temporary forms of international migration in the Russian Federation are predominant, and among them, labour migration prevails absolutely. The main producer of statistics of temporary labour migration is the FMS. Their main data source is the Central Bank with their data on the registration of foreign citizens and stateless persons. This data source provides data on the distribution of migrants by nationality, sex, age and professional qualification. This source may reveal large differences in flows of migrant workers that arrived in the Russian Federation from different countries.

21. According to FMS, in 2012, work permits were obtained by 1.4 million foreigners, licences (for work in private households) were acquired by nearly 1.3 million citizens of countries with visa-free entry to the Russian Federation. The leader among donor countries of foreign labour force for several years remains Uzbekistan. The number of citizens of Uzbekistan who received work permits under the quota reached nearly 590,000 people, then follow Tajikistan (218,000), Ukraine (151,000) and Kyrgyzstan (about 92,000). Labour migrants from Uzbekistan were also sold over 55 per cent of licences (which

amounts in absolute terms almost 677,000), so only citizens of that country in 2012 together received more than a million work permits to the Russian Federation. The share of citizens of Uzbekistan in 2012 was about 42 per cent of all work permits and over 55 per cent of licences issued for work in private households.

22. Aggregated data on work permits granted (including by region, but without the distribution by countries of citizenship), are accumulated through standardized statistical reporting forms of FMS (1-RP, results of performance). This spread sheet form (Microsoft Excel) which is prepared monthly by the Statistics Department of FMS contains several thousands of indicators on the country as a whole and regions. Moreover, two sections of form 1-RP reflect labour migration. Although in the form 1-RP there is no distribution by country of citizenship (this information is available only in respect of licences sold), it is filled more carefully. Some information is monthly published on the website of FMS.

23. It is necessary to note that data on migrant workers residing in the Russian Federation are collected by Rosstat during surveys on employment. Since 2012, the survey program has included questions about the place of residence one year before the survey, and the use of information collected in relation to foreign respondents has started.

24. Statistics of certain, special types of workers – international students, asylum seekers and others – are also being compiled and may be obtained from the agencies responsible for the related issues. Education statistics including information about foreign students is gathered by the Ministry of Education and Science, and is partially presented on the department website and can be obtained in a more extended version at request.

25. FMS produces data on asylum which are available on its website through a number of variables (country of citizenship and region). Besides the above information, FMS provides data on distribution of foreign citizens remaining in the territory of the Russian Federation, on objectives of residence, as well as sex and age groups. Some of the information is published on the official website of FMS.

III. Development of international migration statistics in the Russian Federation

26. For several years, Rosstat has carried out preparations for the transfer of current records of migration flows from paper to electronic media. Development of migration statistics is of utmost importance due to the complexity of processing paper forms and the dramatically increased work load related to the transition to new methodology of recording migration.

27. To solve the problem Rosstat coordinates the work with the FMS which is a major supplier of primary information. Technical and organizational difficulties have also been experienced. However, the development of information technology and FMS's growing attention to improving recording of migration provides grounds for expecting timely improvement of the situation. Computerization of current recording will allow releasing considerable resources both in terms of personnel and finances. These resources can be redistributed in favour of other activities of Rosstat aimed at improving the quality and diversity of migration statistics.

28. One such area is the development of sample surveys – an overall survey vehicle containing varying modules on migration issues, as well as specialized information aimed at serving analysis of the causes and consequences of migration. In 2015, Rosstat plans to hold a micro population census which will also include questions about migration. Rosstat has already begun preparations for the next round of population censuses. There is no doubt

that migration issues will be included in the census form taking into account the experience of previous population censuses and new needs of Russian society for such information.

29. One more problem requires a considerable effort so that it can be resolved. The last population census suffered from the low readiness of population to cooperate. Some information had to be gathered from administrative sources which did not always contain the necessary data.

30. This unwillingness was taken into account in many aspects of the census program, but, perhaps, the most vulnerable area related to the questions regarding migration. Because of that, the 2010 census could not provide data on the place of birth, citizenship and nationality of several million people. For a country like the Russian Federation this error hardly had a notable influence on the validity of the basic population distributions. However, the lack of answers on the mentioned above aspects hampers the analysis of migration and ethnic samples of the Russian population. Issues of legislative consolidation as to mandatory participation in a population census are being actively discussed and supported by the expert community.

31. Rosstat searches for new potential sources of information that would shed light on the important, but unexplored aspects of migration. In particular, in 2011, with the support of Rosstat a pilot project was implemented to assess the potential of civil status records to determine the contribution of migrants to demographic processes in some regions of the Russian Federation. Calculations showed, for example, that in Moscow about 10 per cent of children were born in families, where at least one of the parents has a foreign citizenship, and 6 per cent to a mother with a foreign citizenship. Similar analysis was carried out using marriage records.

32. It is essential to emphasize that all data collected by Rosstat are available to users. Statistics on migration flows can be acquired free of charge, as well as the regular tables of the population censuses of 2002 and 2010. In addition, for the first time in the history of Russian statistics, users have access to microdata of population censuses.

33. Rosstat is increasing collaborating with customers and raising their awareness of the methodology applied in statistical production. This will allow users to interpret correctly the available statistics. It is not only essential for academic research, but also for informed decision making in the field of migration.